

*The Duty of a People that have Renewed
their Covenant with God.*

OPENED and URGED in

A SERMON

*Preached to the second Church in Boston in
New-England, March 17. 167⁹. after
that Church had explicitly and most
solemnly renewed the Ingagement
of themselves to God, and
one to another.*

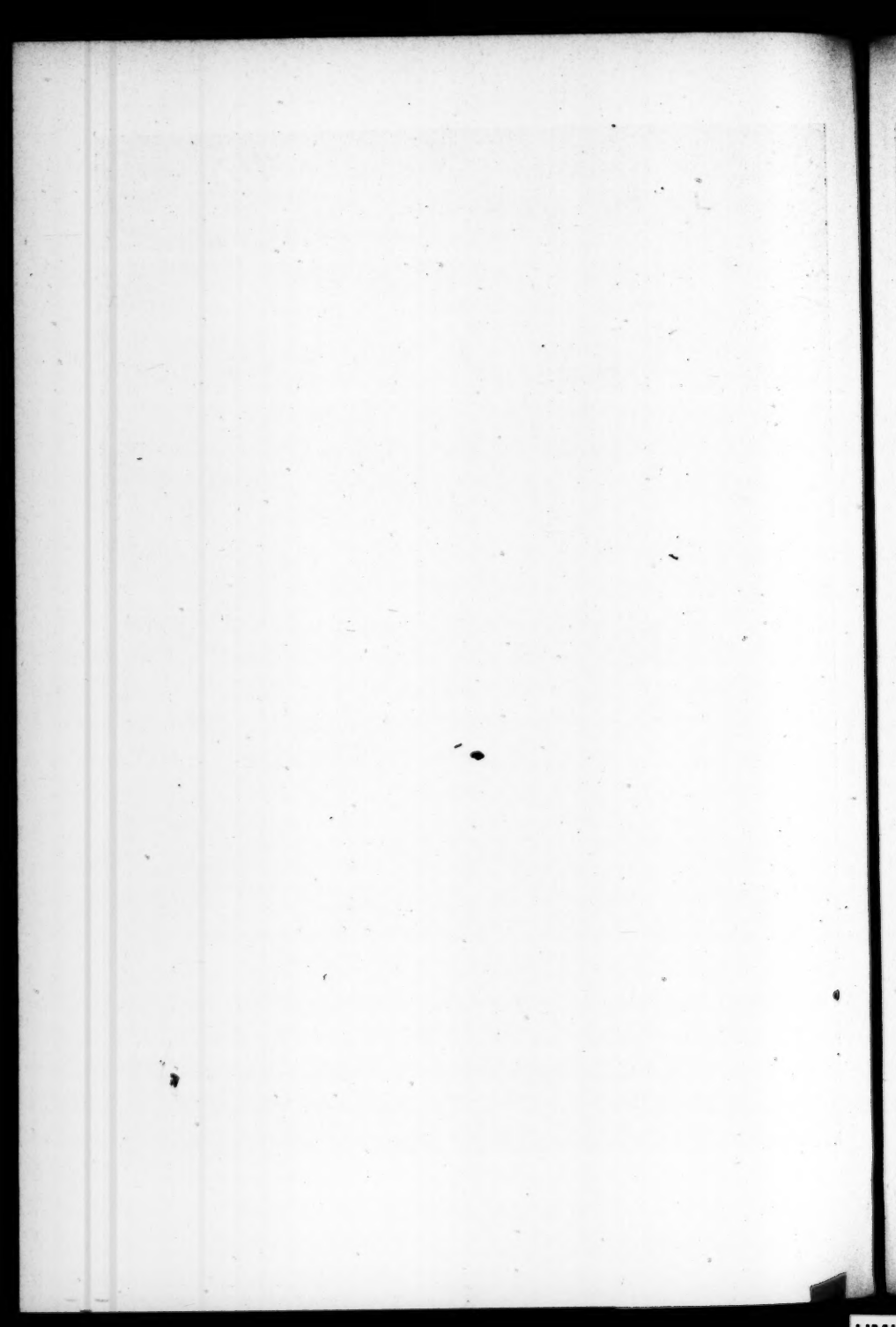
By *SAMUEL WILLARD*, Teacher of a Church in
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Deut. 29. 1. *These are the Words of the Covenant which the Lord com-
manded Moses to make with the children of Israel, in the land of
Moab, beside the Covenant which he made with them in Horeb.*

2 Chron. 15. 15. *And all Judah rejoiced at the Oath; for they had sworn
with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he
was found of them; and the Lord gave them rest round about.*



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The Duty of a People that have
Renewed their Covenant.

Joſh. 24. 22, 23. *And Joſhuaſaid unto the People, ye are Witneſſes againſt your ſelves, that you have choſen you the LORD to ſerve him; and they ſaid, We are Witneſſes.*
 ver. 23. *Now therefore put away, ſaid he, the ſtrange gods which are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD God of Iſrael.*

IN this Chapter we have (parallel to what we have this day ſeen) an Hiſtory deſcribing to us a Renewal of the Covenant between God and his People of Iſrael, Joſhuaſ, a godly and faithfull Governour, ſtanding on Gods part, and tranſacting with the People in his Name. In this Tranſaction I obſerve,

1. The Circumſtances of the Time wherein it was done, which are noted, *Chap. 23. viz.*

1. It was after ſuch time as God had given his People of Iſrael reſt in the land of Canaan, v. 1. He had in his Providence given being to his Promiſe made to their Fathers: Hence I note. That Gods gracious fulfilling of Covenant with his People, is an obligation upon them to Renew Covenant with him.

2. It was when Joſhuaſ was now waxed old, v. 1. and was now ready to leave the world, v. 14. he could not expect to continue much longer among them; whence obſerve, That it is the care of Godly and zealous Rulers when they are to be gone, to leave Religion in as ſafe and hopefull a way as poſſibly they can. Joſhuaſ takes care to leave the People under the ſtrongeſt tye poſſible to continue faithful in the Service of God.

3. It was while the People were yet ſtanding in a good eſtate, and Religion in its glory, and not under decayes, v. 8. *leave to the Lord your God, as ye have done to this day.* It was one of the beſt Generations of this People: and then it inſtructs us. That there are other occasions of Renewing of Covenant beſides Apoſtaſy: It may be done for keeping out

as well as thrusting out Sin, and that especially in hours of Temptation, when there are Canaanites in the land. And it may be done to oblige our selves to a gratefull acknowledgement of Gods faithfulness to us, & to be an engaging bond on us to be faithfull to Him: as this was here.

2. The place where this great affair was transacted, noted in this Chapter, *v. 1. in Shechem, i.e.* in the place where the Sanctuary was set up, it was the place of publick worship, where the Tribes were at that time appointed to hold their general Solemnities, as appears *v. 26.* noting the solemnity of this duty, that it ought to be performed as in the presence of God.

3. The Subjects engaged in this great work, *v. 1.* All the Tribes, *i.e.* the whole Church which was then national, or all those who were by the will of God to transact in those affairs, *viz.* all the Males of age. There were not only the Heads of the People, though Joshua sent for them first, as is mentioned in the former chapter: probably by them to prepare the People for this work: but the Congregation were met together in this engagement.

4. The Insinuations and Arguments by which Joshua leads the People to it, *viz.*

1. A pithy commemoration, or brief rehearsal of Gods mercifull Providences conferred on this People in all their Generations, from the time of Abrahams being called out of his Country unto that day: from *v. 2. to 14.* There is nothing fitter to win upon an ingenious spirit, then the remembrance of great and long continued kindnesses.

2. A solemn word of Exhortation drawn from the prementioned Consideration, in *v. 14.* Exhortations come with the greatest efficacy, when the heart is foreprepared for them by engaging the affections.

3. A probationary permission, connected with a serious protestation, *v. 15.* All Temptations and tryals that are put to men are not sinfull, God himself makes use of them often in Scripture. And this here (as it was intended) draws from the people a most earnest protestation, with a full approbation of the forced Arguments, *v. 16, 17, 18.*

4. Farther to confirm them, and render them the more serious in what they did, he adds a word of caution, declaring and explaining how awfull a thing it was for sinfull man to have to doe in a way of Covenant with God, *v. 19. 20.* Joshuah's scope in this was not in any wise to discourage them in what they were doing, but only to render them the more solemn and serious in what they did; it was; that he might obviate and prevent any rashness and indeliberation in this proceeding,

proceeding, and to let them thoroughly understand the matter they were about, that so they might not trifle with the Almighty : and the Truth is, our vain and hypocritical hearts need all incentives to make them serious in these matters.

5. We have the Transaction it self, or the renewal of Covenant after they were thus in a good measure prepared for it, where we may observe,

1. The professed settled resolution of the people to stand fast by this Engagement, upon the most mature deliberation, ver. 21. and this was the very thing that Joshuah had been labouring in, in all the foregoing process, that he might bring them to a settled, and if it might be, unmoveable conclusion about it.

2. Joshuahs obtestation, or challenging of them as witnesses against themselves, together with their declared assent unto the Truth of it v. 22.

3. The charge which hereupon he layes upon them, ver. 23. every Covenant carries a'long with it a strong bond to duty, and hence this charge is answered by a solemn engagement on their part, ver. 24, they make a promise that they will thus do.

4. We have a declaration of this to amount to an entering into Covenant, ver. 25. *So Joshua made a Covenant.* So, i. e. according to the mode or manner before expressed, viz. by bringing them to a free profession of their subjection to God.

5. There is a Register made, and a monument erected of this Engagement, ver. 26, 27. Those solemn Transactions that have past between God and his People ought to be kept on File, to be a witness of his favour, and their duty.

These things being thus issued, now Joshuah hath served his Generation, done the work he had lying on his hand, and so dyes.

The order of our Text hath been thus displayed, and the parts of it we see are two.

1. Joshua's obtestation of this People, or his introducing themselves as witnesses against themselves, together with their ready assent to it : this People having covenanted and promised he then plainly expounds to them what they have done, and they freely confess it : a People transacting in a Covenant with God, ought to be well informed in that which they do.

2. Joshua's charge given them upon it, the force of which charge is drawn from the precedent Argument, and strongly argued from thence, now therefore : q. d. now more then ever it concerns you to be solicitous about this duty. The words intimate three things to us, viz.

The Duty of a People

1. What is done by a People in their Renewing of Covenant? they doe deliberately chuse God, and strongly oblige themselves to serve him. The word in our Text translated *Chosen*, and the thing it self viz. *Chusing*, doe signifie a carefull Election upon good tryal and experience we have had of a thing; and serving the Lord, intends both worshipping and obeying of him, and is therefore by the Septuagint translated indifferently by (*Latrein & doulein*)

2. That strong and awfull obligation under which men doe put themselves by this Solemnity: they doe hereby enter themselves witnesses against themselves: i. e. this act of theirs will be a particular and undeniable evidence against them, when God shall enter into Judgment with them, if they should after they have done this, decline from their Profession, and so depart from God.

3. What it is that God expects a People should now doe after such a Solemnity, i. e. They must forsake their Sins: this is intimated in the charge given them, *to put away their false gods*. Now the object of every Lust is a false god, that which steals away a mans heart, and is pursued with his most eager desires, that is an Idol. And they must quicken themselves up to Obedience, they must endeavour to be more hearty and more active then ever they had been in the Service of God: for that is to *encline their hearts to the Lord God of Israel*.

If I should undertake the distinct doctrinal handling of these things, the time would fail me, and I should commit a trespass upon your Patience: I shall therefore only improve them at present by way of Exhortation, as they may be usefull to the present occasion

Unto you therefore of this Church and People of God, who (by the help and grace of God) have put your selves upon a fresh remembrance of your sacred Covenant, and renewed the solemn engagement of your selves to God, and one to another, Let me say thus much,

As it is a good and commendable, so it is a great and weighty work you have bin about, and thereupon calls for much serious after consideration. It is a great duty incumbent on you, to keep this dayes work in mind, and to apply your hearts unto it. I know nothing of more weight and solemnity to urge upon your hearts then what Joshua (directed by the Spirit of God) called upon this People in our Text to take knowledge of Remember then,

1. What it is you have been doing this day. The making or renewing of Covenants ought not to be a rash or precipitate act: a Covenanting People ought well and throughly to acquaint themselves with
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the matter and nature of their Covenant : it is good that you should reflect, and ask your own Souls, what is it that we have been doing ? the want of this will lose you the benefit and fruit of all : review then every Circumstance of it, you have it summarily here before you. Know then, That you have this day, by a new and voluntary act chosen you the Lord to serve him : and if you take this in pieces you may see what a great work you have done. Here are three things you have to ruminate upon, your act, your object, and the end.

1. Your act, you have chosen, and if you have indeed made this choice, then you have tasted & seen that God is good, yea, the best good.

Choice is a deliberate act, it is not a thing to be run upon hastily and rashly, but upon mature Consideration, he that hath a choice to make will Ponder the matter in his mind, first consider before he concludes ; this action of yours doth therefore carry in it this profession, that you have entred into your hearts, & seriously thought of the business, yea,

Choice is a segregating, and a disjunctive act, wheresoever there is a chusing, there is also a refusing, at least by consequence ; for, to render a thing capable of being chosen, it must be presented and proffered with some other thing ; there must be more things then one to make a choice out of, for the very act implies divers objects, amongst which one hath the preheminance, in our esteem, and is therefore pitcht upon, in which very chusing, the other are refused. If then you have chosen God, it is certain that you have renounced sin, and world, and all your vanities, and have now openly acknowledged that they are not your Gods, that you will never more place your dependance upon them. If you have chosen God, you have chosen him alone, it is this one God you have set your hearts upon, so he is propounded, Deut 6 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord.* God never acknowledged himself indeed chosen, by them who would have him in conjunction with other things. Again,

Choice is a concluding act, it argues that a man is come to a full and final determination ; as long as the mind hangs in suspence, and the resolutions are wavering there is not choice, if then you have chosen the Lord, you are no longer halting between two opinions, but are plumply come up to this resolved conclusion in which you will rest, *the Lord he is God.* Further,

Choice is a judicious and voluntary act, it is the act of a cause by Counsel, acting according to the dictates of right reason, and freely resting in the conclusion ; if therefore you have chosen God, you have not been drawn to this act against your wills, nor against your rational judgement,

ment, but here is your free choice, and that upon a sufficient discovery of the excellency and suitableness of the object chosen; you can give a good reason for, and are not ashamed to stand by your Election: Rom. 1. 16. Good and evil, God and the world have been set before you, if you have chosen God, you approve him as he is propounded; you have considered what it is that he requires of you, and you do approve of it, and consent to it, and what it is he promisseth, and it is well pleasing to you: this is a free choice: yet again,

Choice. In giving and consenting aſt, if a man may but have the liberty to enjoy his own free Election, he is well pleased, it gives him content, and if you have indeed chosen God, your Souls are abundantly satisfied in him, and you would not exchange him again for any other being in Heaven or in Earth, *Pſal.* 73. 25. you can let others enjoy their vanities and not be envious at them, but count your selves infinitely more happy in your enjoyment of God. Moreover,

Choice is an obliging aſt. it layes a great force upon a man to retain and prize the thing which he hath chosen: for a man to alter his choice when it is fully and determinately made, condemns him of folly, blindness, and indiscretion in the choice which he first made: the aſt it self speaks either gross ignorance, or hasty incogitancy; and all this the sinner is forced to confess when once God opens his eyes, and lets him know what he hath done, till when, he blesseth himself in his wise choice, and condemns the People of God of imprudence, but now acknowledgeth that he was brutish and ignorant, and had rated things, not according to their true value, but his own misguided and deluded apprehensions; and hence it comes to pass that (or this is one reason why) the work of Conversion is so exceeding difficult, because proud man counts his honour engaged to stand to his choice and so, rather then confess himself a fool, will run the hazard of eternal Damnation: Now if choice it self be so obliging, then a renewed chusing of the same thing, or an after asserting of a former choice, adds yet greater strength to the Obligation. And this is the very thing that you have been this day doing: you have formerly, a great while agoe, openly professed that you made God your Choice, and renounced all things for him, this was a great engagement, but what you have now done, is a great deal more: That which you now tell the world, and declare in the presence of Angels is, That after you have had the trial of God so many years, and have had so many occasions to make proof of him, you have found him so good, so gracious, so glorious an one, and your selves so happy in your choice,

that you have had no cause all this while to repent of it, but having experienced him every whit as good as his word. & far better then your narrow thoughts & low hopes could have expected, you are come to give publick Testimony to your full approbation of him after so long a time: thus did this People, they covenanted at Horeb taking God at his word, and now they renew it, to testifie their ready acknowledgement of his fidelity who had not *let one good word*, in which he stood engaged, *fall to the ground*. Finally.

Choice is an act that puts an honour upon the thing chosen, and reflects disparagement upon the thing refused, and thus in this Transaction have you set the Crown on Gods head, and professedly trampled upon all the dunghil vanities of the world.

2. You are also to consider of the object of your choice, the Lord, Jehovah; and if you do seriously think who God is, it will yet further tell you what you have done in chusing of him: I shall only hint in some particulars,

You have chosen a holy God, this Joshuah puts these in mind of, *v. 19*, and it is of solemn consideration, he is a God that hates sin, that loaths the Throne of iniquity, that cannot endure any thing that is contrary to him, or goes about any way to undermine his glory: if therefore you will have him for your God, you must renounce all your impure and unholy wayes and words, and thoughts; you must leave off all filthiness either of flesh, or of Spirit.

He is a jealous God. *ibid.* a God that stands upon his own glory, and will not part with it, no graven image or Idol shall be sharer or co-partner with him; you must therefore resolve to be for him, and for no other, if you reject not all for him, he will not accept you.

He is a God that will by no means clear the guilty, *Ex 34. 7.* thus in our Context, *ver. 19, 20.* if now you shall break Covenant and forsake him, & cast off his fear from you, he will write his displeasure in your blood, those that shall thus be found guilty before him in the great day and not pardoned in Christ, shall have no way for escape.

He is an Almighty God, and if you provoke his anger, and stir up his Jealousie, there is none in the world will ever be able to deliver you out of his hands; *All Nations are to him as the drop of a Bucket*, *Isai. 40. 15.*

He is an All-seeing God, *his Eyes are a flame of fire*: you cannot lodge an Idol in your hearts, though it be in the most secret and retired room of it, but he will find it out: he will search you with candles, will make a through search, and you cannot avoid him.

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Only

Only here is your encouragement, he is a gracious and merciful God too, and therefore if through frailty or Temptation you should at any time forget your selves, and fail in the due performance of your duty, if then you co truly repent and seek his face in Jesus Christ by faith in him, he will receive and Pardon you, *there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared*, Psal. 130. 4. But still, be sure let the solemn consideration of his dread Majesty, be a constant remembrance unto you, of the incessant and diligent care you ought to express in holy endeavours to make good this choise of yours, which you have made of him by Covenant, lest you should stir him up against you, and turn that to your harm which might have been for your benefit and good.

3. The end of your choice. and that is to serve him: you have not only chosen the Lord Jesus Christ for your Saviour, and high Priest, to expiate the guilt of your sins with his own blood, and to stand between you and his Fathers wrath, and make atonement for you, though it would be sad for you if it were not thus; but you have chosen God also for your King and Sovereign, to worship him and obey him, the serving of him intends both, Know this, that you have engaged your selves to do something for God and to be guided in it by his will, & to that end you have wholly renounced your own wills and lusts, that you may be altogether at his command, and fully engaged in his service: you are not therefore now to chuse your own way, but he is to lay it out for you, you are not to be at your own dispose, but he must dispose of you, and you stand engaged to take all well, whatsoever it be that he shall call you unto, whether it be active or passive obedience: you are now therefore to study the Lords will, to be frequent in the Scriptures, searching out the mind of God there, for your direction; and to attend upon all duties, of praying, hearing, reading, meditating, practising: you have now declared, and promised that you will not rise up against the command, nor call it a hard saying, but will receive the word at the mouth of the Lord, and his Servants, and will do accordingly: that you will not murmur at, or rise up against his providential dispose of you, but if he afflict you, cut you short, and carry you through divers tryals, and great exercises, you will submit to his hand, and be content that he shall be your Leader; this is it you have done, and you ought to carry it in remembrance, and study performance.

2. Think how strong a Tye it is which you have bound your selves in; All our covenantings with God carry along with them the nature and force of an Oath, and a Curse: and here will be one more great evidence

that have renewed their Covenant.

evidence against you, if after all this you should depart away from God; by this very act you have put your selves into the quality of witnesses against your selves: This may seem to be a very strange expression; but we must observe, that the meaning of it is not positive, but hypothetical, i.e. you are so, in case you should now fall short of your engagement. We know that a mans hand and seal to a Covenant, doth him no harm, if he mean honestly, and be faithful to perform it; but yet it will be, in Courts of Justice, a self evidence against a man, in case he should afterwards prove false and break it. For a man after Vows to forsake God, and turn out of the good way, this is a double iniquity: If ever God should be so provoked after this as to enter into Judgment with you, and deal in utmost rigor and severity, and make your Plagues great and terrible, this dayes work will vindicate his cause, & declare him a righteous God to the world: Your Professions and Protestations will speak terrible things against you in the day of vengeance: Your Consciences will give in evidence for God, and there will be no excuse for you, yea this whole Assembly are witnesses of what you have done, and this should be a very solemn thought upon your hearts.

Obj. But if the case stands thus, then we have brought our selves into a snare, and it would have been far better if we had never done this.

Ans. It is very certain that every Ordinance of God doth a wicked man hurt, but yet it doth a godly man good. And know this assuredly, that if you vow without purposes to pay; if you come to Covenant with God, and bring an Idol in your heart; if you promise rashly and indeliberately, and ponder not what it is you do, it would have been far better for you if you had not done it: But yet consider withal, that inasmuch as it is one of those wayes whereby God doth both engage, and also quicken his people to a faithful discharge of their duty, and considering also, that such is our backwardness, deadness, and proneness to forget the duty in which we stand engaged to God, and hereupon need all incentives to it, it becomes not a snare, but a blessing to the people of God: we do all of us owe unto the Lord our hearts and lives, it is a Sacrifice which is his due; but ever when we come to bring and offer them up to him, they (like the Beasts which of old were offered up in Sacrifice) are ready to start and run away from the Altar, and must therefore be bound, if ever they be kept. *Psal. 118. 27. Bind the Sacrifice to the horns of the Altar with Cords:* now this covenanting is one of those Cords with which we bind our hearts to, and endeavour to keep them from starting from the service of God, whereto, by our professing our selves

to be his People, we stand in duty indisponibly obliged : let none therefore repent of their covenanting, but endeavour the improving it to high and holy ends : use it as a shield against Temptations and as a spur to duty. When Satan, or any of his Instruments at any time seek to draw you aside, and perswade you to joyne with them in any vain and sinful deed, when they would have you to associate your selves with them in their lewd and sinful practices, call this day to remembrance, and say, shall I do this thing, who have covenanted with God against it ? no, my word is past, yea I have sworn against this disloyalty, I have chosen the Lord, and my hand is to it, I will not therefore do this abominable thing which his Soul hateth. Thus also when you begin to slacken your hands in duty, and are ready to give way to torpid neglect, to leave off, or intermit, or be any way slighty in the discharge of any part of Gods service, now rouse up your selves with the consideration of this, say, as David did, thy vows are upon me, and shall I alter or go back from any part of that which I have bound my self in to the Lord. Thus you have an excellent enclosure to keep you in from wandring and stragling away from God, you cannot possibly goe astray, except you do break over, or through the hedge of the Covenant, and an awful reclaimer it may be to you, when at any time you are broken out, and gotten into the world, and wandring among the vanities and lusts of it, when the regrets and amazing reflections of your own Consciences shall witness against you, that you are Covenant breakers. You shall also have the advantage by it, that you shall have it as a perpetual monitor, gravely and seriously to advise you of, and excite you to your duty, if you do not wilfully or carelessly put it out of your mind.

3. And it is now high time that you doe solemnly set your selves to think what it is you have to doe : Covenants are not meer formal and empty Professions, but they oblige men to the performance of something. Assure your selves, that God expects, and all that have seen or shall hear of this dayes work, will expect that all this adoe should not end in few words : that you should not be like the Nightingale, a voice and nothing else. It is true that every Christian owes a life to be spent for God, and in his fear and service, and to neglect it will be great Sin; but still, every degree of our Profession must be answered with proportionable fruits, or else it will be looked upon as no better then an empty shew, or Pharisaical boast : If, when you have so declared and protested, you now sit still and doe nothing, if all things be as they were, you will fall under that sharp censure which was given of Israel of old, *Psal.* 78. 36, 37, *They flatter'd him with their mouth, and lyed to him with their*

tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. Yea God himself will declare against you, as he did against that hypocritical Generation, Isa. 29. 13. This People honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. Expect that this will be the enquiry that every one will make from this day forward, What singular thing is it that this People doe? What fruits and effects hath their Covenanting wrought upon them? And if there be none, it will cast a foul and infamous blot upon your Profession. Now then up & be doing: date from this day a visible and conspicuous Reformation, which may be seen and taken notice of by all your observers; that those who love Zion may rejoyce in, & boast of you and the mouthes of gainsayers may be stopped, and such as mock at your holy Covenant may be put to silence. That which is now to be done, the Text commends to you under two Heads.

1. You must put away the strange gods that are among you. And doe not think it strange to be put upon this duty: Idolatry is a sin hardly kept out, and with great difficulty thrust out of the Church: It might have seemed strange, that Joshua should give this in charge to the Tribes at this time, especially since he professeth *Cap. 23. 8. That they had cleaved unto the Lord their God unto that day.* But still there will be some Idolatry in the best times, and in the purest Churches. And though I come not as an Accuser, or have any thing to lay to your charge, yet it is good that every one search his own heart, and make through work, remembring you are dealing with the heart searching God. And that there hath too much of spiritual Idolatry been found in these Churches, is no obscure or unknown thing.

There is the Idol of Covetousness, so branded by the word of God, *Col. 3. 5.* so far prevailing, as to the thrusting out in part, if not altogether, religious Worship in many Families, either turning Prayer quite out of doors, making them like heathen Families, whose Character is, *that they call not upon the Name of the Lord;* or making mens Prayers so formal and dead, as if indeed they prayed to a dead Idol,

There is the Idol of Drunkennes, by too too many worshipped to such a degree, that when they awake, they are still with it, and makes them constantly offer up their morning Sacrifice to god *Bacchus* in a drunken Drink Offering; and when (if men walked according to their Profession) we might expect to find them, either in their Closets pouring out their souls before God, and commending themselves to his

guidance for the day; or with their Families, praying down a blessing upon them; we must look them up at som: Ale house, or Brandy-Shop at their Tipling Devotions: which unsuitableness and unseasonableness, though they should not drink themselves down to a reeling & staggering about the Streets, will yet be charged by God for the sin of Drunkenness.

There is the Idol of Sensuality, when men *make their Belly their god*, Phil. 3. 19. When men indulge their appetites, and pamper a piece of Clay, unto a neglect of God, and unfitting themselves for his Service.

The Idol of Pride, causing many to go beyond their estate or degree each one striving to outdoe their neighbours in vanity.

The Idol of vain Curiosity, provoking men to leave the worship and wayes of Gods Institution, and run giddily after new Doctrines and Teachers. These and many others are apt to draw the hearts of men after them, and are to be put away. And if there be any of you that have harboured these or any the like strange gods, its now your work and obligation resolutely to put them away, to be ashamed of them, & to say of them as Ephraim, Hos. 14. 8. *What have I to doe any more with Idols?* You must bury them as Jacob did those of his Family, when he went to worship God at Bethel, and resolve to dig them up and worship them no more. If, after this day, and these Solemnities, such sins as these, wherever they have been entertained, be not reformed, and by every one carefully watched against, God will look upon himself to be contemned, and you must not think to escape his Judgements.

2. You must now encline your hearts to the Lord God of Israel. The word [encline] signifies to bow or bend to a thing, as the labourer bends to his work, and it serves to express industry and diligence: it signifies also to spread abroad: translated to stretch: Isai. 40. 22. and it is the heart that must be thus engaged and extended, i. e. the Soul and all its faculties, and it must be to the Lord, i. e. to his service. There is a great deal you have now to do for God, and you have possibly been remiss, slack, weak in doing of it: now you must mend your pace, revive your industry, and whatsoever it is that your hand now finds to do, you must do it with your might: be sure that your heart be in it, and then God will accept it; nay let your heart be in it, and then be sure it will not be done negligently, although when you have done your best it will be done imperfectly; weaknesses and frailties must be expected, whiles we are labouring under the exercise and oppression of a body of death: and a Paul himself although he had seen his own heavenly glory, yet the
strength

strength of this will not prevent, but still he cannot do what he would: only, here is our comfort, that a heart set for God, and a hand seriously imployed for him, is acceptable. he loves and will acknowledge a willing mind. It may be there are some duties the practice whereof you have quite lost, through remissness, and the prevalency of worldly temptations, these are now to be revived and restored with utmost care and diligence, they have been too long neglected: other duties have it may be been done perfunctorily and to the halves, by reason of a Spirit of formality, these are to be quickned, and new life put into them.

And now having obliged your selves under a sacred tie to God, to the performance of such things which you are not able to perform, by any strength of yours, but only by the strength of grace; in hope of which assistance you have thus engaged, it concerns you to be fortifying Faith in him, and placing an humble reliance upon him, for the continued supplies of his Spirit and grace. Tremblingly consider your own proneness to dissemble with God, and to deceive your own Souls; and how ready now more then ever, Satan will be to assault you with his strong Temptations; and considering how often this people of Israel covenanted and yet because their heart was not right, they went back and provoked God to sell them to their oppressing Enemies; be the more importunate at the Throne of grace, and the more watchful over your own hearts. And that God, who is tender and pittiful, who *knows this frame of yours, and minds you are but dust*, will cover and pass by your many infirmities.

Now that this Renewal of Covenant may be for Gods glory, and your everlasting comfort, and the edification of others; *the Almighty God strengthen you with all might in the inner man that you may be able to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, and so made meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

F I N I S.
